would be met from existing budgetary outlays or would it entail further budgetary provision; and

(c) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Government are taking necessary steps to augment aerial surveillance capability in the sensitive border areas including Kargil.

(b) the cost will be met out of budgetary allocation.

(c) For reasons of national security it would not be desirable to reveal details in this regard.

Press briefing by Army Staff General

1394. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Army Staff General at the press briefing held during his recent visit to U.S.A. has made political statements on matters concerning Kashmir, Loc, Pakistan besides South Asian region, exceeding his brief and having far reaching political implications;

(b) if so, whether government have examined the statements made by Army Staff General at his press briefing in U.S.; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Chief of the Army Staff did not give any press briefing or make any political statements during his recent visit to the U.S.A.

(b) and (c) Do not arise, in view of (a) above.

Indian prisoners of Kargil war in Pakistan

1395. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) How many Indian solthers are still being kept in captivity of Pakistan as prisoners of war, since the Kargil conflict began;

(b) How many of them have been released so far by the Pakistani authorities, including those who were released through the intervention of the International Committee of Red Cross; and